

38th District Legislative Survey



Sen. Jeralita Costa

December, 1999

Dear friends and neighbors,

Public health, transportation, salmon restoration, and I-695. As the gavel gets ready to fall signaling the start of the 2000 legislative session, these are the major issues we'll be considering in Olympia.

During the 60-day session, legislators will be asked to consider a supplemental state budget. In doing so, we'll also be looking at the big question of whether to spend some of the state's surplus to offset some of the effects of Initiative 695.

Some of you may have voted against this repeal of the state's motor vehicle excise tax. But judging by the vote counts, most of you probably didn't. Whichever way you voted, we are all going to be faced with potential changes in our everyday lives.

The Snohomish County Council has made \$2.5 million in cuts, mainly to criminal justice programs and budgets. And statewide, local health departments will lose about \$27 million a year. In other communities, transit services, library programs, and major transportation projects are being put on hold or slashed dramatically.

Public transit is also in for some rather drastic cuts, thanks to I-695. As part of a 25 percent reduction in all Community Transit services, all local weekend service will be eliminated, as well as DART service. This, of course, means more cars on the road and increased air pollution.

Maybe none of this matters to you. Maybe you're irate. However you feel, this is your chance to sound off on these and other issues that will affect the 38th District — issues I will be asked to vote on in Olympia.

Inside this newsletter, you'll find a short questionnaire. With your input, I hope to better understand your concerns and get a better feel for your priorities. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and return it to me.

I'll continue working to prioritize funding that can help improve everyone's daily lives: public safety improvements; better schools; clean and plentiful water for people and fish; and good-paying jobs. I also plan to continue the fight for Boeing worker retraining, the Whitney Graves bill, contraceptive coverage, and other improvements for working families.

Again, thanks for taking the time to fill out this survey to let me know your concerns. I also encourage you to attend one of my 38th District Town Hall Meetings on January 8 in Everett and Marysville. The meetings will include a budget exercise in which you, the voters, help prioritize state spending based on the I-695 realities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jeralita Costa".

Jeralita "Jeri" Costa

38th District Town Hall Meetings

Mark your calendars



January 8

I-695: What happens now?

Sen. Costa invites you to learn more about the impacts of I-695 and participate in a budget exercise in which YOU help make recommendations for the 2000 legislative session.

**10 a.m.-Noon
Marysville Library
6120 Grove Street
Marysville**

**1-3 p.m.
Everett
Community College
Jackson Center
801 Wetmore Ave.
Everett**

Legislative Issues Survey

Shade circles like this: ●

Not like this: ✗ ✓

Initiative 695

State forecasters predict a healthy budget surplus for the next several years. But the spending limitations imposed on the Legislature by voter-approved Initiative 601 will limit our actions. In prioritizing our budget, we will also want to consider long-term funding instead of short-term fixes.

With this in mind, would you support spending some of this reserve to replace I-695-related budget cuts suffered by local governments and the services they provide, such as public health, safety, and transit?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

If yes, what are your priorities?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Transportation
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Public Safety
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Public Health

Transportation

The Dept. of Transportation now faces making \$1.2 billion in cuts for the current budget cycle because of I-695 (repeal of the MVET, or car tabs). In Snohomish County alone, we stand to lose millions for various long-term road projects. Based on these realities, which services would you cut first (in order, 1 being first, 5 being last):

	Voter 1					Voter 2				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Road Construction/Improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Safety (criminal justice, jails, police)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ferries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Passenger Rail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Transit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Teen Driving Restrictions

A recent report by USA Weekend showed the fatal crash rate was five times higher for 16-year old drivers than over-25 drivers in 1997. In an effort to reduce these deaths, 28 states have adopted graduated driver licensing (GDL) systems to incrementally teach novice drivers how to limit risks until they get much-needed experience.

Under current state law, a Washington resident is eligible for an unrestricted driver's license if 1) a parent or guardian signs the application; 2) the applicant passes both the written and driving components of the licensing test; and 3) the applicant completes an approved driver education course.

Would you favor a more graduated licensing approach that requires three phases of licensing, including a learner's permit, an intermediate license with night-driving and passenger

restrictions, and an increase in behind-the-wheel experience before receiving a full license?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

K-12 Education

For the 2000 legislative session, we will be continuing our public education work in three key areas and looking for ways to build upon the successes of last session: supporting high-quality teachers, promoting new strategies for learning, and improving school safety.

Education bills to be worked on include (please rank these bills (1-4) in order of your priorities):

	Voter 1				Voter 2			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Creating a Professional Standards Board for teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing before- and after-school tutoring programs to help struggling students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requiring emergency safety plans in all schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanding the use of community truancy boards or teen courts to help tackle the problem of student truancy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Whitney Graves Bill

For the sixth year, I will co-sponsor a bill now named for the 8-year-old Marysville girl who was accidentally shot to death with a handgun at the home of her 10-year-old friend. Would you support this legislation that would help keep guns out of the hands of children and encourage responsible gun ownership?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Salmon & Environment

This winter the federal government will seek public input on an outline for regional salmon recovery, built around the four H's: habitat, harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower. Do you oppose cutting recent salmon recovery funding to compensate for I-695?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Legislative Issues Survey

Shorelines

Do you support stronger shoreline management programs to help protect the critical nearshore habitat for ESA-listed salmon stocks, even if this means people owning waterfront might have to live with stricter shoreline land-use standards?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Do you support state dollars going to help local governments implement these new standards?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Health Care

Individual Health Insurance Market

Over the past year, three major sellers of individual health insurance policies — Regence, Premera, and Group Health — announced that they will no longer sell new policies to individuals. As a result, people in most counties in the state who do not have coverage through their employer or through the government will have nowhere to turn to get insurance on their own.

Would you support a plan to increase individual health coverage availability in our state, even if it meant including tighter qualifications for health coverage applicants and requiring a 12-month waiting period for coverage of pre-existing conditions?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Patients Bill of Rights

Would you support a Patients Bill of Rights, a consumer protection measure against health insurance denials, which would offer independent review when an insurer refuses to cover treatment, as well as require increased disclosure of policy information?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Mental Health

One in five Washingtonians will suffer from a mental health disorder such as depression or anorexia this year. Yet, despite the fact that these ailments are as treatable as any other illness, it's becoming increasingly difficult to get health insurance that adequately covers treatment for mental health disorders. In the last year, Compass Health (the largest community mental health provider in Snohomish County) has

served more than 12,000 clients at an average cost of \$1,668 per client. And the need is growing.

Most insurers will only pay for a limited number of doctor and hospital visits. And the co-pays for mental health treatment are often much higher than for physical illnesses.

Would you support legislation that would prohibit insurance companies from putting stricter limits on coverage for mental illness than for physical illness?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Tobacco Funds

Last year Washington won an estimated \$4 billion as part of a national tobacco settlement. In January, we will receive our first installment of \$51 million. There has been much debate on how to spend this money. Do you support spending it on programs other than tobacco control efforts and public health as originally intended?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

Breastfeeding Rights

While breastfeeding is supported and encouraged by the health care community, under current state law, nursing mothers face the possibility of being charged with "indecent exposure" for feeding their babies in public, even if they are being discreet. Do you support protecting women from this type of harassment, while encouraging employers to provide nursing mothers with a suitable place to nurse and express milk?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know

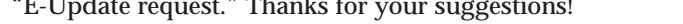
Contraceptive Coverage

State figures show that contraceptive services in public clinics cost about \$150 per year per client, compared with about \$4,750 per client for publicly financed prenatal care, labor, and delivery costs.

A 1998 survey by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner found that only 30 percent of health insurance plans marketed in Washington cover the five FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and devices.

Last session, the state Senate approved a bill requiring insurance companies to include contraceptives in existing prescription drug benefits, but it failed in the House. Do you support equal coverage for contraceptive prescriptions?

Voter 1	Voter 2	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Don't Know



Please stamp and mail back with survey or e-mail my office with a request for the E-Update at costa_je@leg.wa.gov. Under "subject" please type "E-Update request." Thanks for your suggestions!

Costa 2000 Survey Results

Costa 2000 Questionnaire Results

As of January 20, 2000. Analyzing 500 responses

Initiative 695

State forecasters predict a healthy budget surplus for the next several years. But the spending limitations imposed on the Legislature by voter-approved Initiative-601 will limit our actions. For example, a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and Senate would be required to spend dollars from the emergency reserve account (which is only part of the "surplus.") In prioritizing our budget, we will also want to consider long-term funding instead of short-term fixes.

With this in mind, would you support spending some of this reserve to replace I-695-related budget cuts suffered by local governments and the services they provide, such as public health, safety, and transit?

	Count	Percent
Yes	353	70.6%
No	114	22.8%
Don't Know	26	5.2%
Not Answered	7	1.4%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

If yes to previous question, what are your priorities?

	Count	Percent
Transportation	173	34.6%
Not Answered	171	34.2%
Public Safety	92	18.4%
Public Health	64	12.8%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Transportation

The Dept. of Transportation now faces making \$1.2 billion in cuts for the current budget cycle because of I-695 (repeal of the MVET, or car tabs). In Snohomish County alone, we stand to lose millions for various long-term road projects.

Based on the realities of I-695, which services would you cut first? Please assign a rating on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Highest priority" and 5 represents "Lowest priority".

	Average
Road Construction	3.29
Public Safety	3.49
Ferries	2.46
Passenger Rail	2.13
Public Transit	3.11

Sample Size: 500 responses

Teen Driving Restrictions

A recent report by USA Weekend showed the fatal crash rate was five times higher for 16-year-old drivers than over-25 drivers in 1997. In an effort to reduce these deaths, 28 states have adopted graduated driver licensing (GDL) systems to incrementally teach novice drivers how to limit risks until they get much-needed experience.

Under current state law, a Washington resident is eligible for an unrestricted driver's license if 1) a parent or guardian signs the application; 2) the applicant passes both the written and driving components of the licensing test; and 3) the applicant has completed an approved driver education course.

Would you favor a more graduated licensing approach that requires three phases of licensing, including a learner's permit, an intermediate license with night-driving and passenger restrictions, and an increase in behind-the-wheel experience before receiving a full license?

	Count	Percent
Yes	391	78.2%
No	81	16.2%
Don't Know	21	4.2%
Not Answered	7	1.4%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

K-12 Education

For the 2000 legislative session, we will be continuing our public education work in three key areas and looking for ways to build upon the successes of last session: supporting high-quality teachers, promoting new strategies for learning, and improving school safety.

Education bills to be worked on include (Please rank these bills (1-4) in order of your priorities):

	Average
Creating a Professional Standards Board for teachers	2.21
Increasing tutoring programs	1.96
Requiring emergency safety plans in all schools	2.69
Expanding the use of community truancy boards	2.63

Sample Size: 500 responses

Whitney Graves Bill

For the sixth year, I will co-sponsor a bill now named for the 8-year-old Marysville girl who was accidentally shot to death with a handgun at the home of her 10-year-old friend. Would you support this legislation that would help keep guns out of the hands of children and encourage responsible gun ownership?

	Count	Percent
Yes	302	60.4%
No	113	22.6%
Don't Know	67	13.4%
Not Answered	18	3.6%
	500	100.0%

Costa 2000 Questionnaire Results

Salmon & Environment

This winter the federal government will seek public input on an outline for regional salmon recovery, built around the four H's: habitat, harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower. Do you support cutting recent salmon recovery funding to compensate for I-695?

	Count	Percent
No	221	44.2%
Yes	204	40.8%
Don't Know	65	13.0%
Not Answered	10	2.0%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Shorelines

Do you support stronger shoreline management programs to help protect the critical nearshore habitat for ESA-listed salmon stocks, even if this means people owning waterfront might have to live with stricter shoreline land-use standards?

	Count	Percent
Yes	294	58.8%
No	128	25.6%
Don't Know	67	13.4%
Not Answered	11	2.2%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Do you support state dollars going to help local governments implement these new shoreline standards?

	Count	Percent
Yes	218	43.6%
No	160	32.0%
Don't Know	80	16.0%
Not Answered	42	8.4%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Health Care

Individual Health Insurance Market

Over the past year, three major sellers of individual health insurance policies - Regence, Premera, and Group Health - announced that they will no longer sell new policies to individuals. As a result, people in most counties in the state who do not have coverage through their employer or through the government will have nowhere to turn to get insurance on their own.

Would you support a plan to increase individual health coverage availability in our state, even if it meant including tighter qualifications for health coverage applicants and requiring a 12-month waiting period for coverage of pre-existing conditions?

	Count	Percent
Yes	246	49.2%
No	138	27.6%
Don't Know	93	18.6%
Not Answered	23	4.6%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Patients Bill of Rights

Would you support a Patients Bill of Rights, a consumer protection measure against health insurance denials, which would offer independent review when an insurer refuses to cover treatment, as well as require increased disclosure of policy information?

	Count	Percent
Yes	419	83.8%
No	39	7.8%
Don't Know	26	5.2%
Not Answered	16	3.2%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Mental Health

One in five Washingtonians will suffer from a mental health disorder such as depression or anorexia this year. Yet, despite the fact that these ailments are as treatable as any other illness, it's becoming increasingly difficult to get health insurance that adequately covers treatment for mental health disorders. In the last year, Compass Health (the largest community mental health provider in Snohomish County) has served more than 12,000 clients at an average cost of \$1,668 per client. And the need is growing.

Most insurers will only pay for a limited number of doctor and hospital visits. And the co-pays for mental health treatment are often much higher than for physical illnesses. Would you support legislation that would prohibit insurance companies from putting stricter limits on coverage for mental illness than for physical illness? Estimates are that such a proposal would increase premiums by about 1-3 percent a year.

	Count	Percent
Yes	327	65.4%
No	114	22.8%
Don't Know	42	8.4%
Not Answered	17	3.4%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Costa 2000 Questionnaire Results

Tobacco Funds

Last year Washington won an estimated \$4 billion as part of a national tobacco settlement. In January, we will receive our first installment of \$51 million, followed by \$80 million in April. There has been much debate on how to spend this money. Do you support spending it on programs other than tobacco control efforts and public health as originally intended?

	Count	Percent
No	259	51.8%
Yes	204	40.8%
Don't Know	23	4.6%
Not Answered	14	2.8%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Breastfeeding Rights

While breastfeeding is supported and encouraged by the health care community, under current state law, nursing mothers face the possibility of being charged with "indecent exposure" for feeding their babies in public, even if they are being discreet. Do you support protecting women from this type of harassment and prosecution, while encouraging employers to provide nursing mothers with a suitable place to nurse and express milk?

	Count	Percent
Yes	379	75.8%
No	84	16.8%
Don't Know	20	4.0%
Not Answered	17	3.4%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.

Contraceptive Coverage

State figures show that contraceptive services in public clinics cost about \$150 per year per client, compared with about \$4,750 per client for publicly financed prenatal care, labor, and delivery costs. Additionally, in 1997, the state paid for 40 percent of births (60 percent of which resulted from unintended pregnancies) at a cost of \$165 million.

Despite figures like these, many health insurance plans today pay for Viagra and treatment for male-pattern baldness, but not contraceptives. In fact, a 1998 survey by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner found that only 30 percent of health insurance plans marketed in Washington cover the five FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and devices.

Last session, the state Senate approved a bill requiring insurance companies to include contraceptives in existing prescription drug benefits, but it failed in the House. Do you support equal coverage for contraceptive prescriptions?

	Count	Percent
Yes	380	76.0%
No	93	18.6%
Don't Know	20	4.0%
Not Answered	7	1.4%
	500	100.0%

Sample Size: 500 responses

Responses may not total 100.0% due to rounding.